

Following are the questions for Your Opinion, Please—1972:

**YOUR OPINION, PLEASE**

- (1) Do you favor busing school children for racial reasons?
- (2) Should draft evaders and military deserters who fled abroad be allowed to return without penalty?
- (3) Do you favor a nationwide, federally-financed child care system?
- (4) Do you favor legalization of marihuana for personal and private use?
- (5) Do you favor total abolition of the draft and reliance solely on an all-volunteer Army?
- (6) Environmental spending is high, and climbing. Federal outlays went up 600% between 1969 (\$431 million) and 1973 (\$2.5 billion proposed). Private industry will spend \$4.9 billion this year and must spend another \$22.8 billion to meet current anti-pollution regulations. Do you feel this indicates progress?

(Please write the number of the question most important or of greatest interest to you —.)

**REFLECTIONS ON PRESIDENT NIXON'S ESCALATION OF THE INDOCHINA WAR**

**HON. ROBERT F. DRINAN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 1972

Mr. DRINAN. Mr. Speaker, since May 8, when President Nixon qualitatively escalated American military activities in Indochina, I have received more than 2,000 letters from constituents in opposition to the escalation. More than 98 percent of my mail on this issue opposes the President's actions.

I have today sent to a number of constituents my thoughts on this tragic war and our failure to end it.

I would like to share those thoughts with my colleagues.

Fifteen months ago a small group of Congressmen and myself had breakfast with Senator GEORGE MCGOVERN. On that occasion Senator MCGOVERN predicted, with sorrow but with certainty, that the war in Vietnam would be the key issue in the Presidential election of 1972.

I am not certain that I agreed with Senator MCGOVERN on that occasion but his logic was flawless and his prediction accurate.

The speech of the President on the evening of May 8, 1972, demonstrated what Senator MCGOVERN predicted. Vietnamization has failed, the invasion of Cambodia was fruitless, and the revival of the air war was as unsuccessful as the officials quoted in the Pentagon Papers had predicted.

The president stated on May 8 that he expects to use "decisive military action to end the war." He categorically rejected the other two options of withdrawal or negotiation.

The first 2 weeks of reaction and development after the unprecedented escalation of the war announced on May 8 unfortunately yield no evidence that the mining of Haiphong harbor will do anything except involve the United States in Indochina on a virtually indefinite basis. Any intimation of hope that the

Nixon administration had worked out some informal arrangement with Russia to bring the war to an end cannot be substantiated by any credible interpretation of whatever facts are known.

The mining of Haiphong Harbor is possibly the most egregious error ever made in the long history of this war. Russia and China may not have the naval power to respond in kind but there is no reason to think that they will not continue to escalate their own efforts to send more sophisticated weapons to North Vietnam. The mining of the harbor, an act which brings great risks for almost nonexistent benefits, is militarily unsound since it simply will not work. The Central Intelligence Agency—CIA—stated, as quoted in the Pentagon Papers, that:

The mining of the water approaches to the major port . . . would not be able to cut off the flow of essential supplies.

A statement in a National Security study prepared by Henry Kissinger, as published in the April 20, 1972 Washington Post, corroborates this conclusion by stating that the office of the Secretary of Defense and the CIA:

Believe that (if all imports from the sea were denied) the over-land routes from China could provide North Vietnam enough material to carry on, even with an unlimited bombing campaign.

In a statement on May 9, I concluded that the action of the President was illegal, unconstitutional, and totally unjustifiable—even if one accepts the validity of President Nixon's stated military and political objectives in Indochina.

The determination of the President to engage in "decisive military action to end the war" has had a broad impact on officials in the administration. Secretary of State Rogers has testified before a congressional committee that the President's proposed withdrawal 4 months after a cease-fire does not mean that the 100,000 Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel in and around Indochina would refrain from hostile military action if it appeared that the status quo in South Vietnam were being changed. The Navy's top official, Admiral Zumwalt, in response to a question at a press conference, stated that the United States will stop all ships even though it is known that these ships contain only food for civilian consumption.

**WILL THE PENTAGON EVER LEARN?**

The President's determination to engage in "decisive military action to end the war" can hardly be achieved by the military forces of South Vietnam. A study prepared for Henry Kissinger has recently revealed that in 1969 the South Vietnamese Army had the astonishingly high desertion rate of 34 percent on an annual basis. This means that during that year the South Vietnamese Army was losing the equivalent of one division a month.

There is overwhelming evidence, moreover, indicating that the Army of South Vietnam has the most serious morale problems—attributable in part to the fact that the regime of President Thieu has followed the old French custom of not allowing peasants to become military officers. Consequently the core of field

officers, selected in part for political considerations, did not surprise anyone in South or North Vietnam when they broke and ran ahead of their troops in retreat from the battle at Quang Tri.

The cumulative evidence of the unwillingness or the inability of the South Vietnamese to carry out the objectives arrived at by the White House and President Thieu was overwhelmingly clear long before this tragic moment. That evidence was clear a generation ago when the Truman administration in the years 1950 to 1954 paid three-quarter of the total cost of the war of the French which ended at Dienbienphu!

The political and military experts at the Pentagon, furthermore, cannot be unaware that the demilitarized zone, agreed to in the Geneva accords in August 1954, was an arbitrary line designed to be enforced only until an election of all of the Vietnamese people would occur. Since that election was prevented by President Diem, with the help of the United States, the 17th parallel has no legal or political or moral meaning for any nation in the world. Consequently it is contrary to fact to state that the North Vietnamese have been "an aggressor."

**AN ANGUISHED AND BEWILDERED CITIZENRY REACT**

I received at least 2,000 letters and telegrams in the 2 weeks following the President's May 8 reescalation of the war. I doubt if more than 10 of these 2,000 urged me to "support the President." At least 100 implored for the impeachment of the President.

Thousands of students, clergymen, and others have come to Washington in a desperate hope that they would be able to accomplish something. It is increasingly difficult to know what to advise these devoted persons. I have spoken to many groups including students from Kent State, clergymen from all over the Nation, and a group of some 300 physicians that gathered in Faneuil Hall in Boston on May 12.

I urged all these groups to become better informed about the tragedies in Vietnam with the hope that they could persuade Members of Congress and others that there was no reason under the SEATO Treaty why the United States should have intervened in South Vietnam originally nor is there any national interest of the United States involved in the political ideology of an area of the world smaller than New England and more than 10,000 miles from our shores.

I also remind the many audiences who ask me to talk to them that they should be fully aware of the provision in the SEATO Treaty to the effect that each signatory nation agrees to intervene only after all of the constitutional processes of that particular nation have been complied with. In view of this fact and many other circumstances it is clear beyond doubt that the President has no authorization for the institution of a blockade or the broadening of the war in such a way that a confrontation with mainland China and Russia is not impossible.

I also point out to the countless individuals and groups who desire peace that in the ultimate analysis it is not merely the President and the Congress that have continued the war in Vietnam

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*Russell Kirk*

## Closing Hanoi ports long overdue

What President Johnson dared not attempt, President Nixon has done: He has taken measures to seal the harbors of Haiphong and other North Vietnamese ports. Senator Henry Jackson (D., Wash.) and others say this should have been done six years ago, and so it should: But Richard Nixon was not President then.

If mining those harbors will not suffice, it is quite possible for the American fleet to commence a regular blockade. It is not in the power of Russia to defy such a blockade. How long could the Communists of Hanoi continue their invasion of South Vietnam with such an interruption of military supplies?

An old CIA report, leaked to the press, argues that Hanoi still could obtain heavy weapons and ammunition by the land routes through China. Yet that would be a slower and more costly route, especially since the North Vietnamese now depend more heavily upon Russian artillery and tanks and trucks.

And can Hanoi be confident that China would permit Russian materiel to pass unimpeded through their territory from Soviet Asia? Peking has much to gain from an understanding with the United States, and might rejoice in the humiliation of Moscow. North Vietnam is Russia's client state, really, not China's.

President Nixon would not venture to mine and bomb close to the Chinese frontier, were he not reasonably sure that Peking will refuse to assist Hanoi substantially.

There exists reason to suppose that the masters of Peking now desire some compromise settlement in Vietnam. To put it mildly, Mr. Nixon's action against the ports must mightily distress the Communists of Hanoi.

The North Vietnamese leaders, civilian and military, apparently had assumed that peace sentiment in America would restrain President Nixon from undertaking any military strategy. They miscalculated American public opinion.

For the American public desires orderly withdrawal of American ground forces from Vietnam, but it distinctly does not desire American defeat or the brutal conquest of Saigon by Hanoi. If the Nixon Administration continues to withdraw troops while it blocks the North Vietnamese ports, Mr. Nixon need not dread any general public disapproval of his strategy.

Violent collegiate demonstrators against the Nixon strategy actually achieve just the opposite of what they desire: They cause the general public to rally behind the Nixon administration. Blocking highways, burning automobiles, and smashing windows are tactics politically mad, in this country.

MAY 22 1972

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## How to Be a President.

Some sober and objective reflections on the exact manner in which the President managed his tour de force concerning Vietnam seem only proper.

Whatever the outcome concerning an end of the Vietnam fighting, this has been one of the most skillful exercises in executing a difficult and complex strategy made by an American president.

First, it is instructive to refer to the old nine-days wonder, the Pentagon Papers, which are a mine of information. In that study, a memorandum of May 24, 1967, from Undersecretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach went on the record. He suggested (as one alternative to the course of action then being proposed by the military) that bombing of North Vietnam be either limited or stopped, and that a request for 200,000 more troops be held down to 10,000.

The CIA backed the acceptability of such a new alternative for President Johnson's consideration with an estimate that an intensified air attack "would confront the Soviets with difficult choices, although the CIA expected that in the end the Soviets would avoid a direct confrontation with the U. S. and would simply step up their support through China."

This CIA memo was reported in the Pentagon Papers as stating that mining North Vietnamese ports "... would put China in a commanding political position, since it would have control over the remaining supply lines to North Vietnam."

This flurry of May notes came in response to a visit to President Johnson in Washington on April 27, 1967, by General William C. Westmoreland, who, the papers say, requested these things:

— Continued and intensified

— Closing of North Vietnamese ports.

— Additional troops to extend the war into Cambodian and Laotian sanctuaries.

— "... possible invasion of North Vietnam. We may wish to take offensive action against the (north) with ground troops."

We know how that all turned out. Indeed, the Pentagon Papers state that after hearing General Westmoreland "... the President remained skeptical to say the least." They noted that when the general spoke to Congress the next day, "he mentioned the bombing only in passing as a reprisal for VC terror and depredation in the south."

Now consider President Nixon's careful preparation.

There have been warnings since January of a North Vietnamese buildup for some kind of conventional attack on the South. (A typical analysis printed in The Enquirer in February flatly stated it would involve armor and accurately predicted the specific points of attack and the objectives if it were attempted.)

President Nixon opened new and dramatic relations with Red China.

He pushed a diplomatic offensive in Europe which made it imperative to the Soviets that the hoped-for results, of mutual great advantage, wouldn't be jeopardized by other events.

He then ordered intense bombing of the North, of the kind advocated by our military in 1967, and mined the harbors, as advocated by our military in 1967.

Russia can hardly achieve its purpose in supporting Hanoi through

that country's transport system, given the present situation.

Since the Soviets themselves seemed to have been the great authors and subsidizing power for the North Vietnamese Easter offensive, what difference did it make, except to our advantage, if Hanoi became a Peking dependency? The President had already prepared for that eventuality with the greatest of skill.

Reaction from Hanoi and Moscow was less vehement than from doves in the United States Senate. The President of the United States had moved first and prepared his diplomatic battleground. Russia and China had too much to lose to make a crisis out of it.

Revisiting the Pentagon Papers and reviewing the most recent developments in the Indochina War can only bring these conclusions: — Lyndon B. Johnson took the wrong advice, took the counsel of fear, and thereby allowed a war to drag on which his soldiers, airmen and sailors were asking to be allowed to win for him five years ago.

— Richard M. Nixon rescued a situation by using the tools of a 1967 victory to obtain a 1972 respite. More than that was denied him by changed circumstances. What he did, and how he did it, however, should make his pursuit of an end to Vietnam a textbook example of how to be a president.

## EDITORIALS

### The Danger of Definitions

The latest address by the President and briefing by Dr. Kissinger underscore the near impossibility of carrying on with them a critical dialogue about the war. The more one reads and hears what they have to say, the clearer it becomes that U.S. policy is almost hopelessly enshrouded in myth and illusion. From the outset, American policy in Vietnam has been based not on misconceptions or erroneous judgments but on willfully false definitions. Over a seven-year period, these definitions have been endlessly repeated and are now firmly imbedded in innumerable policy statements. By dint of bipartisan repetition at the highest levels, these definitions have, to some extent, been accepted by a large section of the public as unassailable propositions. Still worse, the decision makers are so entangled in these false assumptions that they habitually deceive themselves.

A fundamental rule in the rational handling of embittered controversies is that each party should be able to give a fair and accurate statement of the other's position. Neither the President nor Dr. Kissinger is capable of such an exercise. They cannot or will not see the situation as the North Vietnamese must see it or, for that matter, as the Russians or Chinese may see it. Or if they can, they are so caught up in their own mistakes that they cannot afford to make the effort. Worse, they must cling to these accumulated false definitions in order to avoid acknowledging profound misjudgments by themselves and their predecessors. So they take new and steadily more dangerous risks in a desperate effort to redefine the situation in a way that will rally domestic opinion and shore up a disintegrating political position.

Thus the President's latest gamble is not primarily designed to "win" the war—his own actions and statements imply that it has been lost—but to make it possible for him to journey to Moscow without the stigma of defeat. It would be difficult to negotiate with the Russians about anything just when, say, the North Vietnamese were entering Hue. At the same time he assumes that he can count, at least temporarily, on a section of the public rallying "in support of the President," as it usually does in a time of national crisis. So he is willing to accept the risks because, as he sees it, he has run out of options. But what if the Russians elect not to stage a direct confrontation? What will the next escalation be? A landing of some kind in the North? A threat to use nuclear weapons (as Dulles once threatened the Chinese through the Indian ambassador?) Or the actual use of tactical nuclear weapons?

Bemused by 19th-century notions of power, Kissinger believes that if preponderant power is escalated, a step at a time, and if the "carrot" is seemingly sweetened a bit at each escalation, the enemy must eventually do the bidding of those who turn the screws. It was Metternich's notion that, in the end, "things" (power) are more important than people. But that, too, is a false definition. Ronald Sampson reminds us that the British Empire began with the plantation in Ulster in 1609. But the trouble in Ireland has not yet ended nor will it until the British

quit deceiving themselves about the Irish. General de Gaulle tried to hammer this point home to President Kennedy about Vietnam but without success. In *Memoirs of Hope*, he quotes himself as having said to Kennedy: "You will find that intervention in this area will be an endless entanglement. Once a nation has been aroused, no foreign power, however strong, can impose its will upon it."

Kissinger's strategy of escalation also assumes that the way to win in the nuclear poker game is to raise the ante, at the right time, in such a way as to force the opponent to make the hard decision of acquiescing in the ultimatum (the bid for power) or of staging a counter-escalation. But suppose the other party elects to do nothing for the time being? Suppose the Russians and the Chinese believe (and in this they would be supported by CIA and other "evaluations") that mining the harbors of North Vietnam and bombing the rail links to China will be as ineffective as Vietnamization in solving America's dilemma? No one pretends that the recent actions can have any short-term effect on the war, and substantial expert opinion on logistics believes that the long-term effect will also fall short of the goal. Mr. Nixon, then, will have "spent" one of his few remaining options to no avail, and will be faced with the need to employ some still more dangerous escalation. It is a progress from unjustified aggression to complete outlawry.

There were, to be sure, some new elements in the offer which the President tried to bury beneath the bluster and arrogance of his address, but the North Vietnamese are not likely to take the bait. So then what? He could try to take the entire issue to the Security Council, but he won't. There is, of course, the possibility of a coup in Saigon. Thieu's declaration of martial law is evidence that he senses the danger. If the present regime were tossed out, the successor regime would not need to be called a "coalition" government even if it were that in fact.

In the meantime, the war continues, the number of POWs is increasing, the destruction is mounting and so are the casualties, and Nixon's Vietnamization policy is in tatters. Why, then, doesn't the President show real concern for the American honor about which he talks so much? Why doesn't he follow the examples of Mendès-France and de Gaulle, who saved French honor by bowing out of Indochina and Algiers? The answer, in brief, is that they were not self-deceived, whereas the President has so entrapped himself in a weight of dogmas, promises, affirmations, threats, declarations and false definitions that he is incapable—psychologically, morally, intellectually, politically—of facing the reality of defeat.

TULSA, OKLA.  
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**'ACCEPT HANOI TERMS'**

Editor, The Tribune:

Nixon has replaced one risky policy decision which failed with another risky and even more dangerous one. The CIA in 1969 advised the President against a blockade, certain that it would fail. In light of the reality that South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos will eventually come under the control of Communist regimes (our top officials have already accepted this fact), the best solution appears to be the pull-out of American troops and the creation of a coalition government in South Vietnam.

This way we can be reasonably certain of getting our POWs back. But should the blockade fail (and the odds are against it) we probably will never see our POWs again. Therefore, as a loyal American, I feel that our best policy would be to accept North Vietnam's terms for a settlement, and get our troops and our POWs out forever. This will be a painful decision, but under the circumstances it is the only practical one.

Tulsa

B.H.